

Friday, July 21, 2017

## **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Releases Favorable Environmental Report for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline**

The following is a statement from Leslie Hartz, Dominion Energy's Vice President, Engineering & Construction, regarding the Final Environmental Statement for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline released today by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC):

**"The favorable environmental report released today provides a clear path for final approval of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline this fall. The report concludes that the project can be built safely and with minimal long-term impacts to the environment.** The report also reinforces previous findings by the FERC and decades of research demonstrating that natural gas pipelines do not adversely impact tourist economies or residential property values. With this report, the region moves one step closer toward a stronger economy, a more secure energy supply and a cleaner environment.

**This report is the culmination of one of the most thorough and exhaustive environmental reviews that has ever been performed for a project of this scope.** The report is based on nearly three years of painstaking study by more than a dozen federal agencies, as well as extensive engagement with communities along the proposed route. Drawing on more than 150,000 pages of regulatory filings and more than 75,000 public comments, FERC's report comprehensively addresses all of the environmental and safety issues that have been raised. By any measure, this has been a rigorous and transparent process. It has provided extensive opportunities for public review and participation, and it has left no stone unturned.

**As the report demonstrates, over the last three years we've taken unprecedented steps to protect environmental resources and minimize impacts on landowners.** We've made more than 300 route adjustments to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and protect important features of individual properties. We've adjusted the route to avoid wetlands, public and private drinking water sources, wildlife habitats, sensitive karst terrain, and many other environmental resources. In many areas of the project, we've adopted some of the most protective construction methods that have ever been used by the industry. While some impacts on the environment and landowners are unavoidable with any infrastructure project, the report demonstrates that we've taken all necessary steps to minimize those impacts and balance them with the urgent public need for the project.

**The Atlantic Coast Pipeline is essential to the economic vitality, environmental health and energy security of our region. It will result in more economic opportunity, a cleaner environment, and lower energy bills for consumers and businesses.** The project is urgently needed by public utilities in Virginia and North Carolina to generate cleaner electricity, heat homes and power local businesses. Public utilities in our region are depending on this project to meet the growing energy needs of the millions of customers they serve. With today's favorable report, we are confident we will receive final approval this fall and bring these important economic and environmental benefits to our region."

The Final Environmental Impact Statement is available for download on the [FERC website](#).

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### **EnergySure coalition releases statement on the FERC's Final Environmental Report for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline**

The following is a joint statement on behalf of the EnergySure coalition by Barry DuVal, President & CEO, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, and Dennis Martire, Mid-Atlantic Regional Manager, Laborers' International Union of North America, on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Final Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline:

"After almost three years of extensive study by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and other agencies, we are encouraged by the favorable conclusions of the final environmental report released today. Never before has an infrastructure project in our region received so much scrutiny by so many agencies and offered so many opportunities for public input. We have total confidence in the process, and we are convinced the project will be built with all necessary protections for the environment and public safety.

There is an urgent public need for this project. Public utilities in our region urgently need new infrastructure to provide electricity and home heating to their millions of customers and support the growth of manufacturing and other new industries.

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline promises to be an economic game changer for the entire region. The project's construction will generate tens of thousands of new jobs and stimulate billions of dollars in economic activity. Once operational, the pipeline will produce tens of millions of dollars in new annual tax revenue for local governments and lower energy costs for all consumers in the region.

This project is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalize our region's manufacturing economy. Economic developers across our region are hard at work recruiting manufacturers and other new industries, but the region's existing pipelines are fully tapped and unable to support them. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline will bring the new supplies of natural gas we need to attract these industries and the thousands of new, good-paying jobs they will create.

The project is also a critical element of the region's transition toward a cleaner energy future. The transition from coal to cleaner-burning natural gas has already allowed our region to make drastic cuts in carbon emissions, and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline will only accelerate that progress in the years to come. Natural gas also serves as a companion to renewable energy sources because it provides the reliable, around-the-clock backup power utilities need to keep the lights on and the economy running when renewables are not producing electricity.

We are encouraged by this very positive step forward, and we urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to approve this vitally important project."

Below are additional statements from individual Energy Sure members in West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina:

#### **WEST VIRGINIA**

##### ***Steve White, Director, West Virginia Affiliated Construction Trades***

"I want to thank FERC for their diligent review and open, transparent public process. For the last three years our members have attended hearings and expressed our support for this project. Today we are excited this project is moving forward. Construction of the pipeline will put thousands of West Virginians to work and stimulate close to \$500 million in economic activity over a two-year period. These aren't just any jobs; these are skilled jobs – welders, equipment operators, skilled laborers – that earn upwards of \$50 an hour or more. These jobs provide a livelihood that can support families and a real future for West Virginians."

##### ***Kathy Wagner, President, Harrison County Chamber of Commerce***

"Today the lead federal agency released a favorable environmental report. First proposed in September 2014, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline is nearing the finish line of an exhaustive three-year federal permitting process, setting the stage for final approval later this year. This project comes at an opportune time for West Virginia. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline gives us the chance to grow our state's economy and capitalize on our abundant natural resources for the benefit of our people. Through this pipeline and others, West Virginians have the chance to once again contribute to another century of American progress."

##### ***Don Nester, Buckhannon County Resident***

"Today's announcement by the FERC and their positive environmental report helped us reach a key milestone for this project. Their confidence in the project after an extensive review is encouraging to communities throughout West Virginia. This project will be part of the natural gas revolution that is revitalizing our local economies, providing jobs for tens of thousands of our people and generating enormous sums of new tax revenues for our state and local governments."

#### **VIRGINIA**

##### ***Martha Boneta, Virginia Farmer and Property Rights Advocate***

"The Atlantic Coast Pipeline has been thoroughly reviewed by more than a dozen state and federal agencies for nearly three years. I'm excited to see today the positive review by FERC so that we can move this project forward safely and with minimal impacts to our beautiful rural mountain landscape. Our country depends upon projects like the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to serve the common good. We wouldn't have roads, schools and other public utilities or even hospitals and needed services without energy. All Americans are grateful to the landowners that make it all possible and ensuring that we have an abundant and affordable energy supply to power our lives and the economy."

##### ***Hobey Bauhan, President, Virginia Poultry Federation***

"The favorable environmental report released today by FERC is another major step forward for this important project. Access to affordable natural gas is essential for agriculture, which is Virginia's largest industry with an economic impact exceeding \$52 billion annually and 311,000 jobs. Farmers and agricultural producers depend on natural gas to power their farms and run their processing facilities. Maintaining a strong agricultural sector through affordable energy benefits Virginians in many other ways, including biodiversity, flood mitigation, improved water quality, and soil stabilization. This project is a win-win-win for agriculture, the environment and our Virginia economy."

##### ***Robert Clements, Augusta County Farmer & Retired U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist***

"As a lifelong farmer and retired wildlife biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, I am pleased with the thoroughness of FERC's final environmental report. As the report demonstrates, natural gas pipelines can be developed safely and in a way that protects our environment. Underground pipelines and other types of utility infrastructure are all around us. They are safe, a normal part of life and largely go unnoticed. The right of ways make good wildlife habitat by creating open areas for turkey and grouse and travel lanes for

other wildlife. This is especially true through forested areas. Farmers can continue farming right over the pipeline and pretty much use the land the way they always have. After studying this project for two years and reviewing FERC's environmental reports, I am convinced we can reap all of the benefits of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline while still preserving our farms and natural resources."

**Deborah Gittens, VIRTUoL Designs, LLC, Virginia Beach, VA**

"After advocating for this project for nearly three years, I am excited to see the Atlantic Coast Pipeline reach this very important milestone in the approval process. The final environmental report released by FERC brings Hampton Roads one step closer to securing our energy future and building a foundation for lasting prosperity in our region. Without new pipeline infrastructure, the Hampton Roads economy cannot grow, and we cannot attract new industries to employ our people. But with this project in place, the future of Hampton Roads' economy looks brighter than ever. It's time to secure our energy future; it's time to approve and build the Atlantic Coast Pipeline."

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**Gary Brown, Director, Northampton County Economic Development Commission**

"The positive environmental report released today by FERC is an encouraging and important step towards rebuilding eastern North Carolina's economy. I trust the process that FERC and Dominion Energy have followed for the last three years, and I am ready to see the jobs come to Northampton County. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline will bring a much-needed economic boost to our county, stabilizing electricity prices and generating new local tax revenue. It will also create higher-paying job opportunities and improve the economic opportunities and quality of life for our community."

**John Chaffee, President & CEO, NCEast**

"After nearly three years of rigorous study and extensive engagement with communities, I am ready to see the Atlantic Coast Pipeline get underway. This project will allow eastern North Carolina to meet the energy demands of a growing population and a diversifying economy. We not only need this infrastructure to heat our homes and power our businesses, but we also need it to attract new industries. Our region is a great place to work and live, but we need new infrastructure to keep moving forward. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline will move our region forward by providing the reliable energy we need to grow our economy and bring new development to eastern North Carolina."

**Norris Tolson, President & CEO, Carolinas Gateway Partnership**

"With FERC's environmental review process complete, it is time for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline to move forward. The report released today is comprehensive and provides assurance that the project will be built safely and with minimal impacts to our communities. Nash and Edgecombe counties offer an exceptional opportunity for companies looking to relocate or expand, and the Atlantic Coast Pipeline ensures that we have the energy supply to fuel this growth. The pipeline will provide the low-cost, clean energy necessary to bring more businesses to our region. Our counties need more revenue, more and better jobs and the economic stimulus that easy access to natural gas will bring over time. I urge the FERC to approve this important project."

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*The EnergySure Coalition is a group of businesses, organizations and individuals across North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and beyond that is standing up for reliable energy in our region. Increased demand for energy is expected to continue growing in both Virginia and North Carolina. The approximately 600-mile Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) is designed to make our region energy sure by connecting us to an abundant supply of affordable, cleaner-burning natural gas. With the ACP, we also will benefit from cleaner air, lower energy costs and job creation. EnergySure's goal is to educate, share facts and participate in informed discussions about the ACP and its vital role in meeting the region's energy needs. For more information, visit [www.energysure.com](http://www.energysure.com).*